

OVERVIEW OF FRAMINGHAM'S HOUSING PLANNING PROCESS

Housing Liaison Steering Committee

November 2005

The Goal

Our goal is to fulfill Town Meeting's mandate to create a comprehensive housing plan, not just an affordable housing plan.

At Town Meeting's direction, the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board are working together and have formed the Housing Liaison Steering Committee (HLSC) comprised of two members of the Board of Selectmen and two of the Planning Board:

- Katie Murphy, Board of Selectmen
- Ginger Esty, Board of Selectmen
- Ann Welles, Planning Board
- Sue Bernstein, Planning Board

The Steering Committee is supported by a professional consultant as well as Department of Planning and Economic Development and Planning Board staff.

The Steering Committee began meeting in April, 2005, and met weekly until July, 2005, when the meetings became, and continue to be, bi-weekly.

The initial meetings consisted of defining our goal and identifying valid data. We also identified like-communities for a comparison of the directions a housing plan may take and examples of how data have been both interpreted and presented.

The Consultant

In August, 2004, Judith Barrett, from the firm of Community Opportunities Group, Inc., a professional consultant whose expertise is in housing issues was hired to assist in community outreach on the original housing plan through a state grant of \$50,000.

It became clear that the role of the consultant would differ from the grant application given the new intent of our housing plan. Funding for the more inclusive housing plan we require is secure, however, through a Planning Board vote to add \$12,000 of Master Plan funds to develop the broader plan that can then be incorporated into the Master Plan.

The Citizens Advisory Board

It was determined that an advisory group of citizens be organized to provide advice, feedback and recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is committed to incorporating input representative of the Town as a whole.

One of the first orders of business was to identify all critical segments of the community that needed to be at the table. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) membership was identified and contacted by mail, phone, and email.

The HLSC then spent most of its initial meetings developing a comprehensive list of questions that needed to be asked of and answered by the community, represented by the CAC. The CAC has met monthly (June, July, August, September and October) with express goals that include Overview of Process, Housing Supply, Housing Demand, Government Responsibility and Services.

Experts have presented information to the CAC, with adequate time for questions by the CAC. Small group discussions have been utilized to facilitate open discussion.

Data review has been a priority. Maps, demographics, statistics, and information on a wide variety of housing-related topics have been researched and provided by Ms. Barrett, the Planning Department and expert speakers. The HLSC is committed to gathering the most accurate data available and is moreover committed to interpreting that data with great care. Our mission statement is a summary of this goal.

Timeline

We are still very much in the data gathering stage. We continue to find new areas of concern to question and research.

We anticipate a draft of the plan being available early next year, with an initial review of the draft by the CAC and a final review by the HLSC during Spring 2006 – both with the help of our consultant, and final action by Town Meeting in June 2006.

Should you have questions please contact Gene Kennedy in the Department of Planning and Economic Development at (508) 620-4852 or at efk@framinghamma.gov.